A new Territory-wide program aimed at helping families experiencing difficulties to find emergency respite child care will be available in the Northern Territory thanks to a $140 000 NT Government grant.

Minister for Health and Community Services Jane Aagaard announced today that Darwin Family Day Care has been awarded the Government tender to act as the agency responsible for co-ordinating emergency respite child care places.

"Most families need some support from time to time, particularly if they are experiencing difficulties or a crisis," Mrs Aagaard said.

"Families in the NT often don’t have access to extended family members to help out when this happens, so services that can assist can be very important.

"The Respite Child Care Scheme is a new initiative which will work in conjunction with other family support agencies to help families in these situations who may require a short break from their children for respite, or to attend counselling or other appointments."

Darwin Family Day Care will work with family support services with the aim of strengthening families’ ability to access respite child care, identify available subsidies, and facilitate links with other support networks.

The Respite Child Care Scheme will be trialed for 12 months and will provide the following core services:

- Identification of available occasional child care places catering for children throughout the NT;
- Liaison with family support services to facilitate child placements, identification of subsidies or available funding, and links with other parent networks;
- Co-ordinated training for child care providers, ensuring an awareness of relevant issues and consistent support for families;
- Community education and awareness of the Respite Child Care Scheme

"The service will include information about other services that may assist in long term parenting support or child care, in order for families to build relationships and self-help skills," Mrs Aagaard said.